

*The Charitable Education of POOR
CHILDREN, Recommended:*

I N A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH
O F

N O R W I C H:

On *Ashwednesday*, Feb. the 7th. 1721.

Before several of the Gentlemen, Clergy,
and Citizens concern'd in promoting the
CHARITY-SCHOOLS in that CITY.

By WILLIAM SUTTON, M.A.
Vicar of *Saxthorpe* in *Norfolk*.

L O N D O N:

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The Character of the
CHILDREN

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH

OF



ON A SERMON
PREACHED AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH
AND CHURCHES CONCERNED IN THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH

BY WILLIAM BENTLEY, M.A.
Vicar of St. Martin's

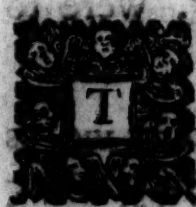
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by Thomas Oliver, in Warwick Lane.



St. MATTH. vi. 19, 20.

Lay not up for yourselves Treasures upon Earth, where Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and steal.

But lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor steal.



THESE Words, my Brethren, now read unto you, are Part of that Gospel, which our Holy Mother the Church has appointed for this Solemn Fast-Day; teaching us in them how, and after what Manner, we are to keep an acceptable Day of Fasting to the LORD: That it doth not consist in bowing down the Head like a Bulrush, and spreading Sackcloth and Ashes under us, as the propheticall Way of Speaking is,

or in being of a sad Countenance, that we may appear unto Men to Fast, as the Chapter of the *Text* has it : These are Marks indeed, but they are External only, and may be false and deceitful, and impose so long, and so far upon the World, that the Man himself at last may be deceived by them, and imagine himself to have merited at God's Hand, when he is far from doing so : Whereas those Signs and Tokens, which are True and Genuine, are chiefly Internal, flow from the Heart and the Affections, and are productive of Noble and Lasting Fruits, such as manifest themselves in Acts of Mercy, and Pity, and Charity, that Part of it especially, which consists of Alms-giving, and doing Good in all its several Kinds, to the rest of our Fellow-Creatures. Accordingly to set the Christian right in his Apprehension of these Matters, the *Church* seems judiciously to have made Choice, as I observ'd before, of this very Portion of Scripture, for the Gospel of this Day, to let him see, how fruitless and in vain, all his other external Performances, and Pretences to true Fasting and Humiliation will be, unless a raising up his Mind and Thoughts from Earth to Heaven, a sanctifying his worldly good Things, by an Habit of Benevolence and Good-will, by the Grace of Charity, were to accompany and go along with 'em.

AND has not this same CHURCH, think we, as judiciously made Choice of several other Portions of Scripture besides this, both Epistles and Gospels, well and wisely appropriated to those Collects, and particular Seasons of either Fasting or Festivity, which revolve in her Sacred *Calendar* ? Doubtless She has, and by Means of these,

Preach'd at Norwich. 5

these, amidst many other Excellencies, it is, that the publick Office becomes a reasonable Service, a Sacrifice without Blemish, an acceptable Part of our Worship and Homage paid to Almighty GOD: So that truly, were it not that we are assur'd our Blessed LORD was evil spoken of, and endur'd great Contradictions of Sinners against himself, one would be almost led to wonder, how so valuable a Composition as our *Liturgy* is, (some of the Compilers of which, shed their very Blood in Defence of the REFORMATION) should come to suffer in its Character in the World. But we well know 'tis the Property of the Ignorant to condemn without Cause; and I am verily perswaded, That nothing would more conduce, with GOD's Blessing, to gain Credit to our Book of *Common-Prayer*, than, if those who now mislike it, would, with a due and becoming Humility, give it a serious Perusal, and examine and see, how all the several Parts of it, by a most harmonious Uniformity amongst themselves, are connected, and contriv'd to promote the Glory of GOD, and be subservient to the Necessities of us his Creatures; and by Means of both, forward and advance that holy Conversation, and devout Frame of Spirit among Men, which would adorn our common Christianity, and be the Stability of our Times.

BUT leaving this glorious Issue of Things to that GOD, who *maketh Men to be of one Mind in an House*; and doubtless can effect it in his Spiritual House, the CHURCH, and will also, we hope, and pray, in his good Time:

PROCEED we at present, to the Consideration of the Words of the *Text*, *Lay not up for yourselves*

Selves Treasures upon Earth, &c. And on these; I think, I may discourse most usefully, and to the Edification of those here present, if in the

First PLACE, I attempt the dissuading you from too eager a Desire, and too earnest an Endeavour after heaping up Riches, express'd here, by *Laying up Treasures on Earth*.

Secondly, If I exhort you on the other Hand (agreeably too to the Counsel of the Text) to *be rich in good Works*; in Acts of Charity, and Beneficence, signify'd to us, by *Laying up Treasures in Heaven*.

Thirdly, I SHALL beg Leave to offer some Considerations, which may not, I hope, so much seem to appropriate your Charity, as to direct a Channel it may most safely flow in, to sollicite you to give the poor Children of the Charity-Schools the Preference in your Esteem, the Right Hand of Fellowship in the dispensing of your Alms.

AND First, I am to attempt the dissuading you from too eager a Desire, and too earnest an Endeavour, after heaping up Riches, or in the Words of the Text, *Laying up Treasures upon Earth*.

AND can I begin this Head with any Words more proper, than those of the Wise King Solomon, who in his Advice to the Sons of Men, not to labour to be rich, very emphatically expresses himself after this Manner, *Wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not? That which at least is not stable, is not of any Duration, which, as he goes on, makes itself Wings, and flies away*: Thus lively setting forth of how uncertain

Preach'd at Norwich. 7

uncertain a Tenure, and how frail a Possession, Riches are; And were this a Truth that need-
ed much Proof, to this Observation of King
Solomon's may we not subjoyn our own Expe-
rience? In this particular, methinks, I could
wish, I had nothing to accuse mine own Na-
tion of, either of their too eager Desire of heap-
ing up Riches upon Earth, or their fatal Dis-
appointment of that Desire. No Man, I think,
can be such a Stranger to what has pass'd a-
mongst us for these last Two Years, as not to
have seen, if not felt, the Decentfulness of
Riches, and the vain fantastick Imagination of
those who have thought themselves possess'd
of the Substance, whilst they embrac'd the
Shadow only, a thin, airy Bubble, blown up
by the Breath of Designing Men, to inveigle
and draw in those who were not Proof against
the Charms of Gold, and its Attendants, false
Honour and Greatness. But I will not dwell
upon this ungrateful Theme; to talk but of
these Things, is the chewing over the Gall
and Wormwood a second time. I choose
therefore to draw a Veil, and could wish,
for my Brethrens Sake, the Remembrance of
it were blotted out of the *Annals* of our *Eng-
lish* History, to save our Posterity from Blush-
ing at the detestable Villany and Rapacious-
ness of some, the weak Credulity of others,
and the insatiable Thirst after Wealth, in al-
most all of their Progenitors. But may not
this dear-bought Experience help to imprint
in our Minds more strongly, a weighty Rea-
son of our SAVIOUR's Precept of not laying up
Treasures upon Earth? We should make, I think,
very little Use of it, if it did not: 'Tis a Truth
now come home to our very Doors, and forces
itself

self upon our Observation, That Riches are of a fleeting, perishing Nature, and that therefore all anxious Care in the acquiring of 'em, is highly Blame-worthy; and consequently, ought to be avoided by us. For, to carry our Thoughts a little farther in this Disquisition, How, I pray, can Riches, or Wealth, or Possessions be of any Duration, or certain Stay with us, when the Earth itself in which they are laid up, is not so? The Earth, the World itself, is in a continual Change and Flux, the Waters hasten not faster to the Sea, than all Things here below melt towards Smoke and Vapour. Behold, the World itself, with all its Pomp and Greatness, is in Daily Decay and Consumption, and how should any Portion of that establish the Soul of Man, which hath in itself no Establishment? How can that be a Foundation of Happiness, or Comfort, which hath no Foundation in itself? Why then, O Man, so fond a Dotage on the Things of it? Why dost thou rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the Bread of Carefulness, thus to amass up Riches; thus to load thyself with thick Clay? as the Prophet *Habakkuk* tauntingly expresses it; Why? *i. e.* With what Pretence to Reason canst thou do all this? For consider with thyself a little, Thou wert born for nobler Ends than this, for higher Aims and Purposes; Thou wert made in the Image, and after the Likeness of God; condemn not thyself therefore to this sore Travail, this sore Labour of accumulating Wealth. 'Tis like digging in the Mines, 'tis like working in the very Fires. Imploy not then thy Thoughts, and the Application of thy Mind and Body upon such vile Materials as these; thy Happiness

Preach'd at Norwich. 9

pineness does not, cannot consist in these, either as thou art a Man, or a Christian, made by G O D with Faculties to adorn this World in another, and better Way; with Capacities to qualify thyself for Glory in another and a better World. But now, all this no Man can do, if he is bent upon the Pursuit of the Things here below; his Affections will be so far from being set upon those Above, that he will be disqualify'd rather for any of those noble Researches; he is so immers'd in Matters of Earth and Sense, that he cannot have any Relish, any Taste of what is Immaterial: His Soul, and its more sprightly Operations, the intellectual Pleasures of the Mind, which spring from a Reflexion on its Divine Original, and the Immortality it is capable of enjoying, the G O D that made it, and the End He made it for; (tho' the sublimest Truths a rational Being can contemplate) yet these, all these, are what he is a perfect Stranger to. He is for something that affects his grosser Senses, for something he can see and feel, his Portion here; and can but imagine all Discourses of a future State, and *laying up Treasures in Heaven*, and a Reward hereafter, to be little more than the fanciful Dreams of speculative and designing Men, who are secret Rivals to his beloved Mammon, and would have him only cast it away from him, that they might gather it up themselves. After some such Manner as this, my Brethren, I conceive it is, that the inordinate Desire and Endeavour after Wealth corrupts the Judgment, fills the Heart, and possesses the Thoughts of the Man that is a Slave to it, whilst he lives; and who knows whether the irregular Passion does al-

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together

together cease when he is dead, whether it remains not with him, and cleaves to his Soul in its separate State, and goads it there? The Philosophers of *Plato's* School seem to have entertain'd some such Opinion as this; and the Souls of the Departed sometimes (assuming 'tis to be thought, some thin, airy Vehicle) appearing about in Cemeteries, where their Bodies are laid, or in Places where their beloved Treasure is hid, showing thereby their ineffective Wishes for a farther Injoyment of it, do give us some tolerable Grounds to believe it. But be that as it will, there is doubtless one very great Evil attending the Love of Riches in this World, which we have not yet mention'd, and that is, That they alienate the Mind from God, they cause a Forgetfulness of Him, and a Want of that Trust and humble Affiance, which becomes a dependant, precarious Creature to place in Him that Daily preserves and keeps him from sinking into Nothing. *Lo, this is the Man,* says King David, speaking of *Doeg the Edomite*, and the Progress of his Impieties, *who took not God for his Strength; but trusted in the Abundance of his Riches, and strengthened himself in his Wickedness.* We all know Pride and Self-admiration, are but too apt to inflame the Heart of Man, and nothing adds more Fuel to make these smoke and blaze, than Wealth in Abundance. This it is which makes Men *sacrifice to their Net, and burn Incense to their Drag*, as the Prophetical Style is, because by them their Portion is fat, and their Meat plenteous; at the same time forgetting the Lord, and the Operation of his Hands, not considering within themselves, That *He maketh Poor, and maketh Rich; that*

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Preach'd at Norwich. II

He bringeth low, and lifteth up. And this shall suffice for the first Particular, the dissuading you from too eager a Desire, and too earnest an Endeavour after heaping up Riches, express'd here in the *Text*, by *Laying up Treasures upon Earth.*

THE *Second* was, To exhort you on the other Hand, (agreeably too to the Counsel of the *Text*) To be rich in good Works, in Acts of Charity and Beneficence, signify'd to us, by *Laying up Treasures in Heaven.*

AND the better to encourage us to this, let us consider, That so to do, thus to employ our Wealth, is to act conformably to the true Use of it, and to the Design of GOD, who gave it us. That Man surely has but a low and groveling Idea of the Use of Money, who can imagine that it can really profit the Possessor of it, when 'tis either cramm'd down in a Chest, or seal'd up in Bags, or sent out to increase its Fortune by griping Interest, whilst at the same Time the greedy Owner is labouring for more, perhaps, in honest Ways, but with dishonest Care. Ah me! That he should not rather bethink himself, how much the true Use of it would be better answer'd by spending some Part of his Gains or Income upon those numerous Objects of Beneficence, which seem on Purpose, by the good Providence of GOD, to be placed in his Way, as it were at every Turn, that one would think he could not overlook 'em; that he could not but recollect they had some Right, some Title to his Stores, and consequently, he must break through the Laws of Justice, as well as Charity, to let 'em pass by altogether unregarded.

Especially, if he consider'd, That thus to do, thus to relieve these poor unhappy Creatures, is to comply with the Design of that Good GOD who made him and them; aye, and who made them both also thus to differ. GOD who hath made of one Blood all Nations of Men, could, if in his Infinite Wisdom He had thought fit, by his Infinite Power have made all Men sufficient for themselves and their dependant Relatives, of Substance and Ability enough not to have needed the Assistance of others of their Fellow-Creatures: But then, (not to speak now of other Inconveniencies thence arising) there would have been taken away the happy Opportunity of the Exercise of many a Christian Virtue and Grace, which now shine forth with a becoming Lustre on Earth, and will most gloriously advance the Saint in Heaven: In the Poor Man, Humility, Patience, Contentedness, Trust in GOD, Thankfulness to Man, Prayer for his Benefactors, in short, a Conformity to the Holy JESUS in his suffering State: In the Rich Man, Compassion, Condescension to the Infirmities of others, bearing in some measure their Burdens, comforting the Afflicted, relieving the Necessitous, thus also letting the Image of his SAVIOUR manifest itself in him likewise, in the most unbounded Beneficence, and diffusive Ways of doing Good. My Brethren, what a Constellation of Virtues would be here at once eclips'd, if the Poor, this weighty Load the Poor, as we may think and call them, were not always with us, were not before our Eyes, lively Patterns of the Passive, to excite us to be more lively Patterns of the Active Virtues? Blessed GOD! how justly dost Thou
tell

Preach'd at Norwich. 13

tell us by Thy Prophet, That *Thy Thoughts are not our Thoughts*; and yet, as holy *David* says, *How precious are those Thoughts to us-ward*, how graciously dost Thou consult our Interest in our Obedience, and make our promoting the Happiness of our Brethren, to be the Perfection of our own, and that our Abundance may be a Supply for their Wants, that there may be an Equality.

BUT to proceed, Let us now turn our Eyes from our Wealth, and the Consideration of the true Use of it, and the Use GOD design'd we should put it to, and the great Reason we have to bless his holy Name for affording us the Means so to apply it, and place 'em upon ourselves, and see whether we have not within us a Principle strongly moving us to Acts of Charity and Beneficence. And here must it not be acknowledg'd that there is a Congruity, a Connaturalness to the Soul of Man to practise this, as well as all other the higher and more heroick Strains of Virtue? 'tis a Ray of Divinity darted into his Breast too deep, and co-eval with the first Dawn of Reason and Conscience, no more to be stifled and put out by the Reluctancies of the lower, more inferior earthly Faculties in him, than the Aspirings after Heaven and an Eternity of Existence, can be evacuated by the faint Wishes, and feeble Reasonings of the Sceptick and Libertine to the contrary. Hence comes it to pass, I think, that a Man must offer somewhat of Violence to himself and his own Nature, when he goes about to divest himself of that Pity and Compassion, which those that are in Want, and Poverty,

14 *A Charity-Sermon*

verty, and Affliction, call for at his Hands: The Scripture expresses it very emphatically, by a Man's as 'twere hiding himself from his own Flesh; his own Flesh, so constituent a Part of him, that he can no more cease to have a Love and Regard for, than he can cease to be a Man. Hence is it likewise, that when a Man has had an Opportunity of doing a good Deed, in the Sense I am speaking of, why a new Scene of Joy and Pleasure arises in his Breast, sincere and unmix'd, not a-kin to those of dull Sense and grosser Appetite; but refin'd and spiritual, such as flows from an Apprehension of having made a right Use of the Talent committed to his Charge, of having made Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, and thereby gain'd a Title to those heavenly Habitations into which he shall be receiv'd; that so, where his Heart and Treasure is, there he himself may be also. Oh, happy Man! who art so wise as to discern the blessed End of doing Good, and act accordingly; who can't use this World, and not abuse it; Oh, well art thou, and happy shalt thou be! for when CHRIST the Righteous Judge shall appear, then shalt thou also appear with Him in Glory.

THERE are in Scripture Two Passages which very lively set forth to us the ample Recompence which attends the Charitable Person, on Account of those his good Deeds; the one in this World, the other in that to come. The first is in *Isaiab* Chap. lviii. where these lovely Acts of Beneficence are represented, not only as the sure and certain Exemplification of such a Fast as is acceptable to the LORD, but also as deriving a peculiar Blessing

Preach'd at Norwich. 15

sing upon the Authors of them. Hear we the Evangelical Prophet from the Mouth of the LORD himself, *Is not this the Fast that I have chosen? Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and that thou bring the Poor that are cast out, to thy House? When thou seest the Naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own Flesh? Then shall thy Light break forth as the Morning, and thy Health shall spring forth speedily, and thy Righteousness shall go before thee, the Glory of the LORD shall be thy Rere-ward.* And (as he goes on) *if thou draw out thy Soul to the Hungry, and satisfy the afflicted Soul; then shall thy Light rise in Obscurity, and thy Darkness shall be as the Noon-Day.* And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy Soul in Drought, and make fat thy Bones; and thou shalt be like a watered Garden, and like a Spring of Water, whose Waters fail not. My Brethren, what a Torrent as 'twere of pompous Eloquence is here before us, what bright and shining Images has the holy Prophet amass'd together, to paint out to us the Glorious State of the Charitable Man in this Life! Here is the breaking forth of the Morning Light! Light rising in Obscurity! Darkness converted into Noon-Day Brightness! A Garden water'd by a continual Spring! The vigorous Relish of Health! The satisfying of the Soul in Time of Drought! Bones replenish'd with Fatness! The Guidance of the LORD, and his Shelter and Protection, signify'd by his Glory being his Rere-ward! We lose much indeed of the Beauty of this, and many such-like Passages of Scripture, by not being acquainted with the Eastern Manner of Speaking, which ran much upon Metaphors and figurative Expressions; but we may observe, here are the
most

most joyous Things, in Nature, or in Human Life, from natural Causes, or supernatural Assistance, all compil'd together, to lay a Foundation for such a Man's Happiness, to make his Life flow smoothly on, secure of the Protection of that God, whom in doing Good he strives to imitate, and whose Royal Law of Love he thus religiously endeavours to fulfil.

BUT alas! What is this Life, this short Scene of Action or of Joy? a Reward eternal in the Heavens, is what is more especially promis'd to the good and charitable Man: and this is, I think, also very plainly pointed out to us in that other Passage of Scripture, which is recorded, *Matth. xxv.* where our Blessed LORD describing the judiciary Process of the last Day, seems to make the Allotment of that Share of Bliss or Misery which is to await the Righteous or the Sinner, the Sheep or the Goats, as they are there styl'd in the Parable, to rise in Proportion to their Observance, or Neglect of this great Christian Duty of Charity. The reading of one, and that the joyful Part only of that Sentence, shall suffice: *Then shall the King say unto them on his Right Hand, Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited me; I was in Prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the Righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee Drink? when saw we Thee a Stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? or when saw we Thee sick or in Prison, and came unto Thee?*

And

Preach'd at Norwich. 17

And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me. And are not these little ones here before us, some of the least of these our SAVIOUR'S Brethren; and do they not therefore merit some Regard at our Hands, some Expression of our Charity? Doubtless they do.

HAVING therefore proceeded thus far in the exhorting you to be rich in good Works, and by so doing to lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven, in Obedience to the Commands of God, and the Dictates of your own Reason and Conscience, in order too to procure to yourselves Comfort in this Life, and everlasting Joy in that which is to come: I proceed in the

THIRD and last Place, to offer some Considerations which may not, I hope, so much seem to appropriate your Charity, as to direct a Channel it may most safely flow in, I mean, to sollicite you to give these young and tender Plants, the Charity-Children, the Preference in your Esteem, the Right Hand of Fellowship in the dispensing of your Alms?

AND may I not well and fitly style 'em young and tender Plants, in order from that Topick of their Youth and Innocence, to excite and stir up in you some Bowels, at least, of Love and Tenderness towards them.

Look on 'em, my Brethren; are they not of the same Species and Kind with ourselves,

a harmless, helpless Tribe, not vers'd in the common Arts of Begging, or instructed with feign'd Tears to move the Pity of the Beholders, and force from 'em a kind of strain'd mechanical Charity, such an one as owes its Rise, at best, to a compassionate Sympathy; but on the contrary, with a silent Oratory pleading their Case to our Reason and Judgment, and ingaging our Affections on their Side by Motives strong and cogent, and suitable to the Dictates of our common Christianity. See how they appear before you in their native Simplicity, with what Sweetness of Voice, what Decency of Gesture, what Modesty of Countenance, all testifying a Soul at Ease within itself, and capable of noble Improvements and Christian Graces, if you will but vouchsafe to contribute your helping Hand, if you will but become Fellow-Workers with their and your CREATOR, in filling up those Chasms and seeming Flaws in his great Workmanship of the World, which indeed are not so, are no other than what He in his providential Wisdom ordain'd should be so, that thou mightest make to thyself thereby Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness; and by so doing provide for thyself Bags that wax not old. There seems not so much Room left here for the Question in the Gospel, Whether did these sin or their Parents, that they were born poor? as there is to apply the Answer our SAVIOUR gave, They were born so, that the Works of GOD might be manifested in them. These Things appear so to be for their Sakes, *That the abundant Grace which is in you, might through the Thanksgiving of these many, redound to the Glory of GOD.*

THE

Preach'd at Norwich. 19

THE Glory of GOD; that indeed is what, as it ought to be the Aim of every good Man, so is it like to be well advanc'd by the Care we may take of these his little ones, these Virgin Souls, which at present, 'tis to be hoped, have contracted few of those Pollutions and Defilements which are to be met with in the midst of this naughty World. Ah! Let 'em not now be thrust out into it shiftless and forlorn, to combat with those many Temptations which Idleness, and bad Examples, and hard Penury may lay in their Way, and obtrude upon their softer Age, susceptible of every ill Impression, without some Helps at least, some Guard against them from the Counsels of the Wise, the Precepts of Virtue, and the Laws of Religion. And this you alone can afford 'em, you, whom GOD hath bless'd with a greater Abundance of the good Things of this Life, you can by providing for 'em good Nurture and Admonition, compensate to 'em the Disadvantage of their obscurer Birth and its appendant Evils; free them from the Darkness which uninstructed Nature must have left 'em in, and set them in that Respect upon a Level with Children born to better Fortunes, and the Benefit of a more liberal Education. Happy ye, in the mean Time, who have so noble a Scene of doing Good laid before you, so fair an Opportunity of training up so many poor destitute Creatures to honest Callings and the Ways of Industry, and at the same Time setting their Souls, their better Parts, secure into the Paths of Righteousness, and Joy, and Peace.

NEITHER do I exhort you to this for GOD's Sake, or for their Sakes alone, but for your own also; your own Temporal Good and Welfare as well as your Eternal, which is consulted and advanc'd by this ingenuous Education of the Children of the poorer Sort.

MEN and Brethren, ye that stand at the Head of the Trading Part of this Flourishing City, ye that are no small Ornament to this numerous Assembly, and in being so fulfill my Joy, judge ye what I say: When I tell you once again, That you consult your own Advantage by encouraging these Schools of Charity, and training up the needy Youth of this Place to honest Diligence and Principles of Virtue; be ye my Judges in this Matter of the Truth of what I say. You well know the Business of this City in the necessary Dispatch of it requires the Hands of many Hundreds, some Thousands of the meaner Sort of its Inhabitants as they are passing thro' the several Stages of Life, from mere Infancy almost to Youth, and so to Manhood and Old-Age; it requires, I say, the Hands of many such: But alas! What are their Hands, how feeble and insufficient, how little to be rely'd upon, without their Hearts and Consciences to guide them in the Discharge of the Trust that may be repos'd in 'em, in the several respective Offices in which they may be imploy'd for their Masters Service during the Course of their whole Lives! And is not the Heart deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked in general, much more in particular is it not in untutor'd young Persons full of Falshood, Lying, and little

Preach'd at Norwich. 21

little disingenuous Arts and Shifts, to avoid the Blame of Giddiness and Inadvertency? And how ill an Effect this must have upon Business, where Trust is requir'd and a just Account to be given, who is there that sees not at first Sight? Is it not obvious to every one, that Diligence, Obedience and Fidelity, are Qualifications most necessary in a Servant; and yet what is it lays upon 'em so strict an Obligation to the sincere Exercise of these Virtues, as Principles of Religion, and the Knowledge of their Duty imprinted upon their Minds in their tender Years will do? Nay, where these are wanting, the other will never be exercis'd as they ought. Fear indeed, and Design and Interest, may oblige such Persons to what the Apostle calls Eye-Service, to an outward Shew and Pretence of Diligence and Honesty; but 'tis only a well-grounded Sense of Goodness, that sets the Head and Hands at work to promote the Master's Advantage, when he is absent; 'tis Religion that teaches him, That tho' his Master's Eye may sometimes be off, yet the Eye of his MASTER which is in Heaven never is; and consequently, that he ought to behave himself so in his Business, as to please not only Men, but GOD. And when is this true Knowledge of GOD, and themselves, and the World about 'em, and the Relation and Obligation they bear to each, to be instill'd into them, so as to have its with'd for Influence; but then when they are not able to procure it for themselves, when they need it most; when by the Death or Poverty of their respective Parents, they are become the just and necessary Care and Charge

22 *A Charity-Sermon*

Charge of others, the joyful Charge of the truly charitable Man, who looks upon himself not as the Proprietor, but the Steward only of the good Things he enjoys; ready to dispense 'em for the Master's Use, and in Obedience to his Command, among his Fellow-Servants, freely imparting them more especially to the Behoof and Advantage of those little ones, who are so dear to his Blessed SAVIOUR, that He has strictly enjoyned him, To take heed that he despises 'em not, subjoyning for it this weighty Reason, that they are the Care, the Charge of Angels, those glorious Spirits, whose happy Privilege it is always to behold the Face of GOD in Heaven.

AND now, my Brethren, what shall I say more? Need I go over any of the Arguments I have already used, or shall I draw out any more to stir you up to this excellent, this truly Praise-worthy Part of a Christian's Duty, either Charity to the Poor in general, or to these young Children in particular, now here present, and Praising GOD together with us in his House of Worship? Truly I think I need not: He must be void, I say not, of Reason, but the Bowels of a Man, much more of the Faith and Love of a Christian, upon whom what has been said shall make no Impression, shall not excite to some Degrees of Bounty at least, if not Munificence and Liberality towards them. To promote which publick Spirit in you the more, I desire you to call to mind what the Scripture says as to this Particular: That GOD loveth a cheerful Giver: That the Rich must open their Hands wide;

Preach'd at Norwich. 23

wide : That to whom much is given, of them much shall be required : That he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully : And, with what Measure we mete to others, it shall be measured to us again : These Texts, I think, are very plain, and need no Comment ; every Man knows how to apply 'em ; and I hope the whole foregoing Discourse, which was design'd chiefly to stir up your pure Minds by Way of Remembrance of what is your Duty in this Particular ; that so pursuant to that Charge which St. Paul commands Timothy to give to Rich Men, we may also Charge them that are rich in this World, That they be not High-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but in the Living GOD, who giveth us richly all Things to enjoy ; That they do Good ; That they be rich in good Works ; ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life. But still, after all our Labours in the Work of the Ministry, and how successful soever, by GOD's Blessing, those Labours may be, let us acknowledge with the profoundest Humility and Abasement of Soul, that howsoever we may preach, or you hear, Paul plant, or Apollos water ; yet it is GOD that gives the Increase ; and his HOLY SPIRIT worketh in us according to the good Pleasure of his own Will. Chiefly therefore, and above all, let us not fail to be earnest with him in our Prayers for the Acquisition of this Grace of Charity, saying, in those Words of our Excellent Liturgy, appointed by the Church for the Service of this very Week ;

24 *A Charity-Sermon, &c.*

O LORD, who hast taught us, that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth; send Thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift of Charity, the very Bond of Peace, and of all Virtues; without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee. Grant this, for thine only Son **JESUS CHRIST'S Sake. Amen.**

F I N I S.



